

THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

March 17, 2021

Dear [Commissioner] XXXXX:

As we take a historic step forward together in helping schools reopen and remain open safely with enactment of the *American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021*, I want to recognize the extraordinary, ongoing efforts of you and your colleagues in confronting the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate the work you have done to continue to ensure that America's students receive the high-quality education they deserve.

On Thursday, President Biden signed into law the ARP, which will deliver critical aid to States (as well as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia), districts, schools, educators, students, and families as the country continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) is announcing the allocation that each State, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia will receive under the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund. We will move quickly to get these vital resources to you.

It is with this same sense of urgency that State educational agencies (SEAs) and school districts should plan to expend these funds to safely reopen schools as expeditiously as possible this spring, sustain their healthy operations, and address the significant academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of their students.

I am pleased to announce that the Department will award \$XX,XXX,XXX to [State] in ARP ESSER funds. ARP ESSER funds will allow SEAs to take additional steps to safely reopen schools for in-person instruction and keep them open, and to address the disruptions to teaching and learning resulting from the pandemic. This includes using funds to enact appropriate measures to help schools to invest in mitigation strategies consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools to the greatest extent practicable; address the many impacts of COVID-19 on students, including from interrupted instruction; implement strategies to meet students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs; offer crucial summer, afterschool, and other extended learning and enrichment programs; support early childhood education; invest in staff capacity; and avoid devastating layoffs at this critical moment, ensuring that all students have access to teachers, counselors, and other school personnel to support their needs.

The Department is committed to supporting SEAs in implementing these unprecedented resources. ARP ESSER funding will enable SEAs to promote safe school operations and equity-driven, sustainable, evidence-based programs to serve students – especially those who are the furthest from opportunity – and to continue to strengthen teaching and learning. You have my promise that the Department will do everything in its power to respond efficiently to your questions, provide robust technical assistance and guidance to support evidence-based local decision-making, and put students first as we assist SEAs and local educational agencies in utilizing the ARP ESSER funding.

Recognizing the immediate challenges facing our schools and students, the Department will begin to make ARP ESSER funds available to States this month. You will soon receive a Grant Award Notification (GAN) through the Federal grants management system (G5) providing access to ARP ESSER funds as well as the terms and conditions for their use.

It is particularly important that ARP ESSER funding will enable State and local educational agencies, as well as schools, to support students who have been most severely impacted by the pandemic, which has even further exacerbated the inequities in our education system. Consistent with specific set-aside requirements at the State and district level and provisions for maintenance of equity, Federal relief funds can be used to equitably expand opportunities for the students who need the funds most, including students from low-income backgrounds, students of color, students with disabilities, English learners, students experiencing homelessness or trauma, and students without access to technology.

The attached table shows State allocations for ARP ESSER funds. These allocations are based on the proportion of funds that each State received under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 in fiscal year 2020. If you or your staff have questions, please reach out to us directly or submit questions to your State's program officer using your State's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) Mailbox: [State].oese@ed.gov.

With ARP ESSER and other funds, the American Rescue Plan represents an extraordinary commitment to the Nation's students from early childhood to postsecondary education – and to our shared future. You can find the ARP ESSER Fund fact sheet attached.

Thank you for your hard work and continued commitment to students in your State.

Sincerely,

Miguel A. Cardona, EdD  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education